

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 03405 202059Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CA-01 DEAE-00 SSO-00 PPT-01
L-03 JUSE-00 HA-05 H-01 NSCE-00 /028 W
-----062843 202104Z /66
O 201830Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3797
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMCONGEN RIO DE JANEIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3405

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, CASC, PA
SUBJECT: W/W ARRESTS:
PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES DETAIN ESCAPED NARCOTICS OFFENDERS

REFS: A) LA PAZ 6675, B) ASUNCION 3401

1. THREE US CITIZENS ESCAPING FROM BOLIVIAN PRISON (REF A) WERE
DETAINED BY PARAGUAYAN INTERPOL SECTION WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO
BOARD NOON LAP FLIGHT 402 AUGUST 20 FROM ASUNCION TO RIO.
THREE PRESENTED NEWLY-ISSUED US PASSPORTS (REF B) BUT
WERE STOPPED BY TWO POLICE INSPECTORS, ALERTED BY INTERPOL
LA PAZ, AND TAKEN TO ASUNCION POLICE HEADQUARTERS.
CONSULAR OFFICER WHO WAS AT AIRPORT ACCOMPANIED THREE TO
POLICE HEADQUARTERS. CONSUL TELEPHONED AMBASSADOR FROM JAIL
AND PRISONER CUNNINGHAM ACCUSED LOCAL DEA REPRESENTATIVE
OF ALERTING PARAGUAYAN POLICE TO THEIR PRESENCE IN ASUNCION.
THEY ARE SENDING INTERESTED PARTY MESSAGES TO FAMILIES
ACCUSING DEA OF COMPLICITY. PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES SHOWED
CONSULAR OFFICER TELEGRAM FROM LA PAZ POLICE NOTIFYING GOP
OF ESCAPEES PRESENCE IN ASUNCION AND THEIR INTENTION TO
EXIT ON LAP FLIGHT 402 FOR RIO EQUIPPED WITH US PASSPORTS
ISSUED BY AMEMBASSY ASUNCION.

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2. PARAGUAYAN POLICE ARE NOT ANXIOUS TO HOLD THREE
AMERICANS HERE OR TO HAND THEM OVER TO BOLIVIA, ACCORDING
TO US CONSUL. CHIEF INSPECTOR SUGGESTED THAT AMBASSADOR
APPROACH FONOFF TO REQUEST RELEASE OF PRISONERS FOR RETURN
TO US BEFORE BOLIVIANS MAKE FORMAL REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION
ON MONDAY.

3. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: I DO NOT BELIEVE CHARGE AGAINST
DEA REPRESENTATIVE ASUNCION OF HAVING ALERTED PARAGUAYAN POLICE
TO ARRIVAL OF THREE PRISONERS HERE. LOCAL DEA REP DENIES
HAVING ALERTED PARAGUAYAN POLICE AFTER PRISONERS' ARRIVAL.
IN ANY CASE, HIS CABLE TO DEA AND LA PAZ (ASUNCION 3400) GIVES
WRONG FLIGHT INFORMATION. I TENTATIVELY CONCLUDE FROM LA PAZ
POLICE TELEGRAM SHOWN OUR CONSUL WITH PRECISE FLIGHT INFORMATION
AND FACT US PASSPORTS ISSUED HERE HAD TO HAVE BEEN PROVIDED
BY AMEMBASSY LA PAZ BASED ON REFTEL B. NOW THAT THEY ARE
UNDER DETENTION, HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER
INSTRUCTING EMBASSY LA PAZ TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE BOLIVIAN
AUTHORITIES AGAINST ASKING FOR EXTRADITION. IN ABSENCE OF
BOLIVIAN REQUEST, IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS, I WOULD ASK FONMIN
TO EXPEDITE RELEASE OF THREE FOR RETURN TO THE US. EMBASSY
LA PAZ IS, OF COURSE, BEST JUDGE OF WHETHER BOLIVIANS CAN BE
INFLUENCED TO WAIVE EXTRADITION ON EVE OF IMPLEMENTATION
OF PRISONER EXCHANGE TREATY.

4. FOR SCS: PLEASE CONTACT FAMILIES AND CONVEY EMBASSY'S
REGRET OVER UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ASSIST DEPARTURE OF
THREE CITIZENS FOR US. PLEASE INFORM FAMILIES THAT
PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES HAVE ASSURED CONSUL THEY WILL BE
TREATED WELL AND CHIEF INSPECTOR GAVE ORDERS TO THAT EFFECT
IN CONSUL'S HEARING
WHITE

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